

their association closer than a mere working partnership they were a band of brothers The others, fully recognising his gifts, were by no means disposed to allow them to bloom unseen The Fabian Society provided just the right garden

In the earliest discussion which led to the foundation of this famous body, none of the quartette participated Nor had they any part in the division that took place inside the earliest group, between those primarily concerned with individual moral perfectibility, who went off into the Fellowship of the New Life, and those primarily interested in the reconstruction of society on new social principles, who remained to constitute the Fabian Society Social organisation, rather than the "highest moral possibilities," would certainly have been the banner under which Sidney Webb would, instinctively, have ranged himself, although banners were never in his line, and the approach developed by the Fabians suited him, indeed was largely made by him, in its rejection of anything of the sort

The earliest debates of the society, says Mr E R Pease, their historian, were "in the main on things abstract or Utopian " But in March 1885 Sidney Webb resolutely brought them down to earth in a paper which he read, called *The Way Out* Two months later, about a year therefore, after G B S , he was elected a member, within a year he was, like Shaw, on the Executive, where he has remained ever since Sydney Olivier

joined almost
at the same time as he did, Graham Wallas a
little later
Among other outstanding Fabians of these
early, highly
argumentative days, were Hubert Bland,
William Clarke,
Harold Cox, and Annie Besant The total
membership
in the mid-'eighties was only forty
Of the outlook and habit of mind of the
Fabian at this
epoch, Shaw has drawn a vivid picture